



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
**KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA**

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL LOPEZ JOINS MULTISTATE COALITION URGING BAN ON  
MENTHOL CIGARETTES AND FLAVORED CIGARS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 16, 2024

HONOLULU – Attorney General Anne Lopez today, alongside a coalition of 20 attorneys general, submitted a comment letter to the White House Office of Management and Budget urging the Biden administration to complete its review and swiftly implement proposed public health regulations to prohibit the sale of menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars.

The [proposed FDA Rules](#), which are supported by ample evidence, are long overdue. In today's letter, the coalition specifically highlight calls for action by civil rights and public health groups to remove menthol tobacco products from the marketplace to protect public health and address the systemic and disproportionate impact of these products on minority communities and other vulnerable populations, including young people.

“The Department of the Attorney General urges the Biden administration to act now and prohibit the sale of menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars. Flavored tobacco products continue to pose significant threats to public health in Hawai'i,” said Deputy Attorney General Ashley M. Tanaka of the Department's Tobacco Enforcement Unit. “Menthol cigarettes, in particular, create age, gender, and racial disparities in Hawai'i as they are disproportionately used by youth, women, and certain ethnic groups including Filipinos, Native Hawaiians, and Japanese.”

Tobacco companies add menthol to cigarettes and cigars, which disguises the harsh taste of cigarettes. As a result, this flavoring remains a primary reason as to why young people initiate and become addicted to smoking. Overwhelming scientific evidence — including the FDA's own findings and statements — leave no doubt that menthol cigarettes have far-reaching adverse impacts on public health, resulting in more smoking and more death and disease from tobacco use.

In the letter, the multistate coalition urges the Biden Administration to finalize its review of the FDA's proposed rules without delay.

As state and territorial chief legal officers, the attorneys general address unfounded claims that the proposed menthol ban will increase illicit trade or criminalize the individual purchase,

possession, or use of menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars. The coalition argues that the FDA's proposed rules are critical steps for advancing health equity and protecting public health. Moreover, banning menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars will bring the country closer to achieving the Cancer Moonshot, President Biden's historic push "to end cancer as we know it."

Attorney General Lopez joins the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, and South Dakota.

A copy of the letter can be found [here](#).

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